

United States Department of Agriculture

Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Agricultural Marketing Service

Directive AMS 4451.1 2/20/01

EMPLOYEE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

1. PURPOSE AND COVERAGE

This Directive states Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) policy and outlines responsibilities for employee awards and recognition. This Directive applies to all AMS employees.

2. POLICY

1. It is AMS policy to fairly and equitably recognize and reward employees for excellence in service to USDA's mission.
2. Awards and recognition will be granted consistently with the principles, procedures, and documentation requirements stated in the Department's GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION, issued November 7, 1994 (<http://www.usda.gov/da/employ/recog.htm>).
3. The following principles will be emphasized particularly in AMS awards:
 1. Encourage the use of various options for awards, i.e., monetary, non-monetary, spot awards, and time-off awards.
 2. Encourage employee input in awards recommendations.
 3. Encourage the establishment of gain sharing and goal sharing awards programs to recognize employees who implement cost-saving procedures.
 4. Simplify awards justification procedures as much as possible. For example, achievements documented on an employee's performance plan to justify an "exceeds" element rating, is sufficient documentation for a lump sum performance bonus.

3. DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY

1. Office of the Administrator. Staff Directors in the Office of the Administrator may recommend awards for the approval of the Administrator or Associate Administrator.

Distribution: AMS Originating Office: MRPHR-PD

2. Programs.

1. Deputy Administrators are delegated AMS's full awards authority to:
 1. Approve time-off awards, extra effort awards, and lump sum performance bonuses not exceeding \$5,500; and
 2. Quality Step Increases.

This authority may be redelegated.

2. If a Deputy Administrator is the recommending official for an award, the Administrator, Associate Administrator, or designee will be the approving official.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Deputy Administrators will:

1. Administer an awards program consistent with USDA policy and this Directive, including the delegations of awards authorities to appropriate levels, and the establishment of awards systems tailored to the Program.
2. Establish a verification or oversight procedure to ensure that:

(a) Awards are given fairly and equitably; and

1. Justifications support the recognition.
3. Evaluate awards systems within the Programs for effectiveness and compliance, including an annual review of awards data.
4. Recommend outstanding individuals and groups for additional recognition through the Secretary's Honor Awards Program.

2. All managers and supervisors will:

1. Recognize employees for specific achievements.
2. Ensure equity in the distribution of recognition.
3. Consider input as appropriate from coworkers, customers, or other sources when making recognition decisions.
4. Recognize contributions in a timely manner.
5. Emphasize the importance of teamwork through recognition of groups.
6. Emphasize nonmonetary recognition for specific achievements.
7. Promote the recognition program by encouraging employee participation, arranging for appropriate presentations, and periodically publicizing recognition activities.
8. Allow those recognized to choose the type of recognition they receive when choices are possible.
9. Forward suggestions and inventions promptly to the appropriate party for evaluation.
10. Review nominations to ensure that recognition is linked to the contribution and that the amount accurately reflects the value of the contribution rather than grade level or other nonmerit factors.

5. SPECIAL AMS AWARDS PROGRAMS

Special award programs may be developed to recognize employees' accomplishments of AMSwide scope in crosscutting or specialized areas, such as contributions to equal employment opportunity and civil rights, or safety.

6. INQUIRIES

1. Direct inquiries and requests for guidance to the Program Development Staff, MRP Human Resources.
2. Copies of current AMS issuances can be accessed on the AMS Administrative Issuances home page at www.ams.usda.gov/issuances.

/s/ William J. Hudnall

Deputy Administrator

MRP Business Services